

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1 1. A method for sharing user information, comprising:
2 receiving a request from a web site host for information concerning a user that has
3 visited a web site maintained by the web site host;
4 verifying a authorization of the web site host to receive the information;
5 determining a level of access for which the web site host is authorized; and
6 transmitting user information to the web site host such that the web site host can
7 personalize the web site for the user.

1 2. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of verifying the authorization
2 comprises receiving a user code provided by the web site host which was received by the
3 web site host from the user.

1 3. The method of claim 2, wherein the user code is associated with a
2 predetermined level of access to user information.

1 4. The method of claim 2, wherein the user code comprises a transient key.

1 5. The method of claim 2, wherein the step of determining the level of access
2 comprises comparing the user code provided by the web site host with a user code
3 assigned to the user and relevant to a particular user information set.

1 6. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of transmitting user information
2 comprises transmitting user information from a centralized repository which stores user
3 information for a plurality of users.

1 7. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of transmitting user information
2 comprises transmitting user profile information while withholding personal information
3 about the user.

1 8. A method for acquiring user information that is used to personalize a web
 2 site for the user, comprising:
 3 receiving a user code from a user, the user code being associated with a particular
 4 information set pertinent to the user;
 5 requesting user information from a centralized repository that stores the
 6 information set by providing the user code to the centralized repository; and
 7 receiving the information set associated with the user code.

1 9. The method of claim 8, wherein the step of receiving a user code
 2 comprises automatically receiving a user code when the user visits the web site.

1 10. The method of claim 9, wherein the user code is automatically appended to
 2 a uniform resource locator (URL) of the web site.

1 11. The method of claim 8, wherein the step of receiving a user code
 2 comprises receiving a user code that is manually entered by the user at the web site.

1 12. The method of claim 8, wherein the user code comprises a transient key.

1 13. A method for personalizing a web site for a user, comprising:
2 receiving a user code from a user;
3 requesting user information from a centralized repository that stores user
4 information by providing the user code to the centralized repository;
5 receiving the user information associated with the user code; and
6 generating a web site based upon the user information that is received.

1 14. The method of claim 13, wherein the step of receiving a user code
2 comprises automatically receiving a user code when the user visits the web site.

1 15. The method of claim 13, wherein the step of receiving a user code
2 comprises receiving a user code that is manually entered by the user at the web site.

1 16. A system for sharing user information, comprising:
2 means for receiving a request from a web site host for information concerning a
3 user that has visited a web site maintained by the web site host;
4 means for verifying a authorization of the web site host to receive the information;
5 means for determining a level of access for which the web site host is authorized;
6 and
7 means for transmitting user information to the web site host such that the web site
8 host can personalize the web site for the user.

1 17. The system of claim 16, wherein the means for verifying the authorization
2 comprises means for receiving a user code provided by the web site host which was
3 received by the web site host from a user.

1 18. The system of claim 17, wherein the means for determining the level of
2 access comprises means for comparing the user code provided by the web site host with a
3 user code assigned to the user and relevant to a particular user information set.

1 19. A system for acquiring user information, comprising:
2 means for receiving a user code from a user, the user code being associated with a
3 particular user information set;
4 means for requesting user information from a centralized repository that stores the
5 user information set by providing the user code to the centralized repository; and
6 means for receiving the user information set associated with the user code.

1 20. The system of claim 19, wherein the means for receiving a user code
2 comprises means for automatically receiving a user code when the user visits the web
3 site.

1 21. The system of claim 19, wherein the means for receiving a user code
2 comprises means for receiving a user code that is manually entered by the user at the web
3 site.